

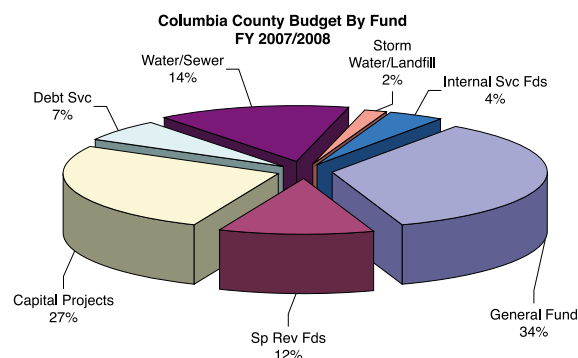
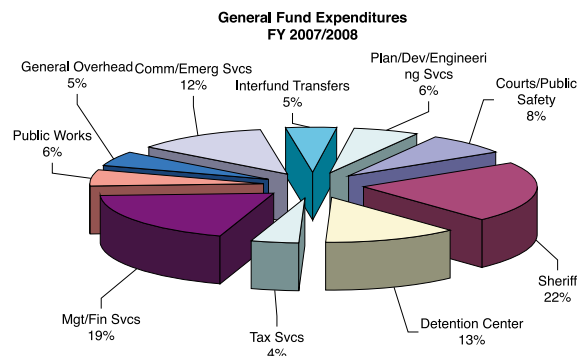
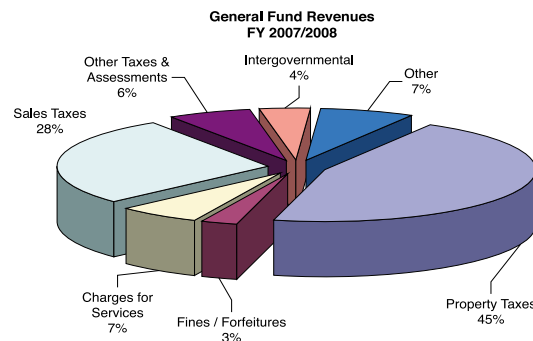


## A BALANCED BUDGET!

*By Ron Cross  
Board of  
Commission  
Chairman*

At the June 5, 2007 Board of Commission (BOC) meeting, the Board passed a balanced budget for fiscal year 2007/08. As instructed by the BOC, the budgets for all Columbia County funds were balanced with no property tax increase and no new programs unless authorized by the BOC. The total budget is \$159,327,727 and is 14.44% larger than last year's budget. This budget includes a new Fleet Replacement Program and a Fuel Use/Conservation Policy.

Due to growth in sales tax revenues, the BOC is considering its first millage rate rollback equivalent to the increase in property tax revenues due to reassessment of existing properties for the County portion of property taxes (approximately 31% of your total tax bill). Our current millage rate is 7.20 mills plus .50 mill for debt service, and 1.68 mills for fire service in the unincorporated area of the County. The debt service and fire service millage would not be rolled back. Even though the cost savings for this rollback will not be huge for most folks, it does represent that the County is being fiscally responsible and not growing faster than it should and that the sales tax from new businesses in the County are having a direct impact.



### All Funds

General Fund	\$55,606,803
Sp Rev Fds	\$18,733,757
Capital Projects	\$42,351,900
Debt Svc	\$10,430,060
Water/Sewer	\$22,812,600
Storm Water/Landfill	\$2,926,815
Internal Svc Fds	\$6,465,792

**Total Budget** **\$159,327,727**

### General Fund

Property Taxes	\$25,276,653
Fines / Forfeitures	1,607,000
Charges for Services	3,620,757
Sales Taxes	15,400,000
Other Taxes & Assessments	3,575,000
Intergovernmental	2,088,791
Other	4,038,602

**Total Revenues** **\$55,606,803**

Courts/Public Safety	\$4,376,995
Sheriff	\$12,084,116
Detention Center	\$7,065,336
Tax Svcs	\$2,372,497
Mgt/Fin Svcs	\$10,674,336
Public Works	\$3,275,744
General Overhead	\$2,916,356
Comm/Emerg Svcs	\$6,881,004
Intergovernmental	\$2,625,000
Plan/Dev/Engineering Svcs	\$3,335,419

**Total Expenditures** **\$55,606,803**



## MASTER PLANS AND PROJECTS

*By Barry Smith  
Community & Leisure Services Division Director*

The Community and Leisure Services Division has recently completed two important master plans. The Euchee Creek Greenway Master Plan was accepted by the BOC on May 15th and is a multi-phased project from Chamblin Road to Riverside Park. The County has applied for a \$1 million Georgia DOT grant for

*(Continued in the back)*

(Continued from the front)

Phase I which will establish the Greenway's trail head at Patriots Park and initiate a loop through Bartram Trail.

The second master plan is for Wildwood Park and was accepted by the BOC on June 19th. It is filled with exciting plans for a lodge and cabins for visitors and patrons attending regional and national events in the park, a mega playground, expanded equestrian facilities and campgrounds, and a larger swimming area and more. The total cost for all the improvements is \$28 million and will take 20 to 30 years to complete. The first project under this master plan, which is budgeted, will be a new entrance way and gate house.

Other division projects include:

- The new Blanchard Woods Park will open this fall and current projects include sodding five soccer fields, landscaping, and installation of roadways.
- The Evans Town Center Park Committee is composed of seven citizens. They have met three times and will meet again before making their recommendations to the BOC on August 21st. Soon after, a consultant will be hired who will have public meetings so all citizens can have input into the planning process. After receiving information from the Committee and the public at-large, the consultant will present a draft concept plan to the BOC. There are very limited funds currently available for infrastructure improvements to the park property.

## FIREWORKS SAFETY!

By Pam Tucker, Emergency Services Director

While fireworks are an exciting tradition on July 4th, parents and guardians have to remember that they can also be unsafe when used improperly. The best way to enjoy fireworks is to visit public fireworks displays put on by professionals who know how to safely handle these explosives. Still, we strongly recommend adults and children learn how to practice safe measures when using fireworks by following these safety tips:

- Never give fireworks to small children. Children under 12 should not handle sparklers. Sparklers, considered by many the ideal "safe" firework for the young, burn at very high temperatures and can easily ignite clothing.
- The person shooting the fireworks should always wear eye protection and never have any part of the body over the fireworks.
- Light only one firework item at a time.
- Do not point or throw fireworks at another person.
- Stay away from illegal explosives.
- Never attempt to fix or re-ignite malfunctioning fireworks.
- Keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy in case of a fire or a mishap.

## COME AND LISTEN TO THE AUGUSTA SYMPHONY

Your Augusta Symphony plays music you want to hear, whether it's your first children's concert or a golden anniversary night out. Series tickets for all 2007-2008 concert series—Masterworks, Pops, Columbia County at the Performing Arts Center, and Family Fun—are now available. Call 706-826-4705 or visit [www.augustasympphony.org](http://www.augustasympphony.org) to reserve your seats today!

## Community Calendar

### July

- 4 *4th of July Celebration* at Patriots Park beginning at 4 PM featuring family fun games such as balloon toss, watermelon seed spitting contest, sack races, and rubber pig toss. Welcome at 6 PM and free concert feature local favorite *The Mood* starting at 7 PM and after the fireworks at dark. For more information call 706-312-7194 or visit [www.columbiacountyga.gov](http://www.columbiacountyga.gov). Thanks to the University Health Care System for their great assistance with this event.
- 11 *Monkey around at the Main Library* – showing original 1968 *Planet of the Apes* movie. Ages 12-18 years at 2 – 4:30 PM. Pre-registration required by calling 706-447-7660.
- 12 *1st Annual Columbia County Chamber of Commerce Business Expo* from 11 AM to 8 PM at the Doubletree Hotel Augusta (2651 Perimeter Parkway near the intersection of Bobby Jones and Wheeler Road) and is free - call 706-651-0018 for more information.
- 14 *Wetlands and Plant Dispersal* at 10 AM at the Reed Creek Wetlands Interpretative Center – contact Susan Dyer at 706-210-4027 or [sdyer@columbiacountyga.gov](mailto:sdyer@columbiacountyga.gov) for more information.  
Robbie Williams, *A Few Flowers for My Soul*, book signing at the Main Library from 2-4 PM in the downstairs reading gallery. Call 706-447-7660 for more information.
- 15 Sunday Scrabble Club at 2-5 PM in the Main Library – bring your own board.
- 16 Book discussion on the political thriller *Snow* by Orhan Pamuk from 6:30 – 7:30 PM in the Main Library.
- 17 Adult embroidery class at the Main Library for ages 12 and up from 6:30 – 8:00 PM. Pre-registration required by calling 706-447-7660.
- 18 *Monkey around at the Main Library* – showing the 2001 remake of the *Planet of the Apes* movie. Ages 12-18 years at 2 – 4:30 PM. Pre-registration required by calling 706-447-7660.
- 21 *Wetlands and Plant Dispersal* at 4 PM the Reed Creek Wetlands Interpretative Center – contact Susan Dyer at 706-210-4027 or [sdyer@columbiacountyga.gov](mailto:sdyer@columbiacountyga.gov) for more information.
- 24 *Embroidery Class* – ages 8 -14 years at Main Library at 6:30 PM. Pre-registration is required by calling 706-447-7657.  
*Get Lost in Gaming: LAN Party* – ages 12-18 at the Main Library from 6:30 to 7:30 PM. Limited to 8 players. Pre-registration required by calling 706-447-7660.
- 26 Lost on Grump Island Murder Mystery - ages 12-18 at the Main Library from 6 to 8 PM. Pre-registration required by calling 706-447-7660.  
Brown bag lunch discussion of *The 13th Tale* by Diane Setterfield 11:30 – 12:30 PM in the Main Library.
- 29 Sunday Scrabble Club at 2-5 PM in the Main Library – bring your own board.  
Joshilyn Jackson, author of *Between, Georgia* and *Gods in Alabama*, talk and book signing at the Main Library at 2:30 – 3:30 PM.

### August

- 3 *3rd Annual Summertime on the Canal* beginning at 4 PM at the Savannah Rapids Pavilion and Canal Headgates. Outdoor festival with children's games, arts & crafts, eating contest, music and dance performances from 4-9 PM. Rubber duck race at 8 PM and an evening concert at 9 PM. For more information call 706-312-7194 or visit [www.columbiacountyga.gov](http://www.columbiacountyga.gov).

*Sunset Music Series* - Free concerts at the Columbia County amphitheater at 7 PM on the following Thursday nights:

August 9- Bragg & Hughes

August 16- Livingroom Legends

August 23- Fret Not!

August 30- Preston & Weston

September 6- Vellotones

Presented by Columbia County Community Events and sponsored by Ernie Blackburn Builders, Pierwood Construction, and Bill Beazley Homes. For more information, call 706-312-7194.